



MESSAGE FROM THE VEEP



The Price of Liberty and Dignity

By Clarence M. Hatcherson

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As all **Montford Point Marine** Association members (and everyone else in this country should) know is the date, 25 June 1941 and its' significance. It was on that day that **President Franklin D. Roosevelt** issued **Executive Order No. 8802**. This action cleared the way for African Americans to enter into service in the Marine Corps, the most demanding of the military services.

This action was not applauded by everyone; on the contrary many were outright disdainful. Appearing before the General Board of the U.S. Navy in January of 1942 **Major General Thomas Holcomb**, the **Commandant of the Marine Corps**, like

virtually all in the Marine hierarchy did not like changing the long standing traditions of the Marine Corps, went on to assert *"if it were a question of having a Marine Corps of 5,000 Whites or 250,000 Negroes, I would rather have the Whites."*

The success of African Americans in the Marine Corps is undeniable but I often wonder if General Holcomb or any of those who thought as General Holcomb did would think twice about being on the battlefield with these men (all Congressional Medal of Honor recipients) who walked through the door opened by the Montford Point Marines.

**The President of the United States takes pride in presenting the
MEDAL OF HONOR
Posthumously to:**

PFC. JAMES ANDERSON, JR.
U.S. Marine Corps, 2nd Platoon, Company F, Second Battalion, 3rd Marines, 3rd Marine Division

Citation:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as a rifleman in Vietnam on 28 February 1967... In [a] singularly heroic act, Pfc. Anderson saved his comrades from serious injury and possible death. His personal heroism,



extraordinary valor, and inspirational supreme self-sacrifice reflected great credit upon himself and the Marine Corps and upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.

SGT. RODNEY MAXWELL DAVIS
U.S. Marine Corps, Company B, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, 1st Marine Division

Citation:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as the right guide of the 2nd Platoon, Company B, in action against enemy forces... Through his extraordinary initiative and inspiring valor in the face of almost



certain death, Sgt. Davis saved his comrades from injury and possible loss of life, enabled his platoon to hold its vital position, and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the U.S. Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.

PFC. RALPH HENRY JOHNSON

U.S. Marine Corps, Company A, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division (Rein), FMF.

Citation:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as a reconnaissance scout with Company A, in action against the



NVA and Viet Cong forces... His prompt and heroic act saved the life of one Marine at the cost of his life and prevented the enemy from penetrating his sector of the patrol's perimeter. Pfc.

Johnson's courage, inspiring valor and selfless devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the U.S. Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.

PFC. OSCAR PALMER AUSTIN

U.S. Marine Corps, Company E, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines, 1st Marine Division, (Rein), FMF.

Citation:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call



of duty while serving as an assistant machine gunner, in connection with operations against enemy forces... With full knowledge of the probable consequences and thinking

only to protect ... [a fellow wounded] Marine, Pfc. Austin resolutely threw himself between the casualty and the hostile soldier, and, in doing, was mortally wounded. Pfc. Austin's indomitable courage, inspiring initiative and selfless devotion to duty upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the U.S. Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.

PFC. ROBERT HENRY JENKINS, JR.

U.S. Marine Corps, 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, 3rd Marine Division (Rein), FMF.

Citation:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as a machine gunner with Company C, 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion... the Marines were assaulted by a North Vietnamese Army platoon employing mortars, automatic weapons, and hand



grenades. Reacting instantly, Pfc. Jenkins and another Marine quickly moved into a 2-man fighting emplacement, and as they boldly delivered accurate machinegun fire against the enemy, a North Vietnamese soldier threw a hand grenade into the friendly emplacement. Fully realizing the inevitable results of his actions, Pfc. Jenkins quickly seized his comrade, and pushing the man to the ground, he leaped on top of the Marine to shield him from the explosion. Absorbing the full impact of the detonation, Pfc. Jenkins was seriously injured and subsequently succumbed to his wounds. His courage, inspiring valor and selfless devotion to duty saved a fellow Marine from serious injury or possible death and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the U.S. Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.

Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. John 15:13 (NIV)



Clarence Hatcherson is Vice-President of the Montford Point Marine Association L. A. Chapter 8

**February is Black History Month
This article honors those Black Marines
who placed the ultimate sacrifice upon the altar of freedom**